

**West Hartford Substance Abuse Prevention Commission (SAPC)
Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2015**

Attendees: Amal Ali, Tracy Bennett, Jeff Bersin, Jackie Colon, Joanna Curry-Sartori, Helen Drohan, Jamahl Hines, Dan Jordan, Joe Kalache, Marc Kotler, Leo Negron, Pat Tyler

Welcome / Introductions / Approve Minutes / Early Departures / Announcements

Jeff Bersin welcomed members and introductions were made. Meeting minutes from the April meeting were approved.

Pat Tyler distributed a form for members to complete their addresses for submission to the town clerk. She also shared a brochure of substance abuse resources created by the Department of Children Families. Pat invited them to a future meeting to discuss these resources in more detail. Finally, Pat announced that she will be transitioning the coordination of the SAPC to Joanna Curry-Sartori of the Bridge beginning in September after sixteen years of service to the SAPC.

Tune-in to Life Results – Pat Tyler and Dan Jordan / Amal Ali of ICR

Pat Tyler shared the results of the twenty-eighth annual Tune-in to Life Week 2015, which was held April 20-25. 509 adults and 791 young people participated in 5 different activities. The event included the following activities:

- “A Trip Down Memory Lane” intergenerational event where the Hall High Jazz Band (20 students) performed music for senior citizens.
- “Opening Lines,” a student-led workshop on talking with your teen about substance use organized by the Lead by Example student organization.
- “Fifth Grade Poster Project” where 750 fifth grade students created posters on what they’d rather be doing than drugs. Firefighters went into the schools to give the students Tune-in to Life tee-shirts and talk with them about their posters. As part of this initiative, a parent letter with a handout entitled “Parenting Myths and Realities” was sent to fifth grade parents (750 families).
- West Hartford Community Television promoted the event on air during the month of April. Many businesses and organizations hung the posters with a description of the project.

Amal Ali and Dan Jordan shared further information on the Opening Lines event that focused on parent/teen communication and was facilitated by young people from Lead by Example. Amal reported that it was a successful event that was attended by approximately 25 parents. The results of the middle school survey were shared and students spoke with parents about the middle to high school transition. Parents reported being impressed by the advice given by the young people and hoped Lead by Example could grow in the middle schools. Amal shared that it was a “test run” for future events which could include high school students speaking with high school parents, as well as an event focused on peer pressure. Helen Drohan suggested that future events be filmed by the public access station. Marc Kotler suggested addressing the issue of how to approach situations where an older sibling or parent is struggling with an addiction. Jeff Bersin shared his opinion that the tone of the event was good and suggested that there be a mix of pre-prepared questions as well as spontaneous ones from the audience next time in an effort to make the event more interactive.

Joanna Curry-Sartori suggested a future event where high school students speak with middle school students, and middle school students speak with fifth graders. Amal shared that when she asked middle school students their top four concerns they reported the following: bullying; racism; body image; and rumors. Lead by Example plans to have a booth at Celebrate West Hartford in June.

Update on Prescription Drug Dropbox / Next Steps– Helen Drohan

Helen Drohan reported that the Bloomfield police officer who was involved with the drop box initiative in Bloomfield has retired. Helen agreed to do more research and report back to the SAPC in the fall. She suggested possibly meeting with a WHPD officer and a Bloomfield police officer to collaborate on this effort.

Expansion of Conard Safe Driving Program to Hall High and Private Schools – Leo Negron

Leo Negron reported that an event at Northwest Catholic High School was cancelled and will be rescheduled. Leo gave the Hall School Resource Officer information about the program. Conard plans to offer the program again next year. They are currently in the process of planning the Safe Grad Party. There was discussion about having the wands that can detect substance use and how to manage its use. For example, what happens if a youth comes up positive for substance use and a parent cannot be reached? There were different views regarding whether or not the wand should be used on all youth attending an event, or only those youth where use is suspected. Pat Tyler shared that when the Bridge offered middle school dances a parent contact name and number were required on the permission slip. Leo reported that Farmington uses the wand at their youth events.

SAPC Membership Expansion for Next Year

There was discussion about having all of the 12 sectors represented on the SAPC. ICR may require that Lead by Example youth who are hired in the summer be required to attend SAPC meetings each month as part of their position. In addition, ICR is meeting with the UConn School of Social Work to obtain an intern to support the work of the SAPC, including new member outreach.

Potential Event Speakers for Next Year – Follow-up

Jamahl Hines reported that he left a message for the Chris Herren organization regarding coming to West Hartford next year. Chris is a motivational speaker who wrote the book “Basketball Junkie” about his drug addiction. He has a documentary on the ESPN program 30/30 called the Chris Herren story. The goal is to have Chris come to West Hartford next year to speak with youth and parents. This could happen in the fall to kick off the school year, or as part of the Safe Driving Program. Timing will depend on cost and availability. It was suggested that event planning could involve the PTOs and Community of Concern. Chris came to Hall High and Northwest Catholic High School last year. He will be speaking at New Milford High School on May 19th. Jamahl has seen Chris speak with all age groups except elementary school and said he tweaks his performance based on the audience. It was suggested that this event target middle school students as well. Joe Kalache suggested the town hall auditorium as a potential location for the event. Joe also suggested the Commission look into Chris Sullivan from the New England Patriots as a potential speaker. Other suggested speaker topics for SAPC monthly meetings next year included self-injury and transgender youth.

June Agenda Creation

There was discussion about having a speaker from True Colors come to our June meeting to talk about transgender issues. Pat Tyler agreed to contact them to check their availability. In addition, Pat Tyler has invited DCF as well so they can share their substance abuse resources (we are awaiting confirmation of attendance).

New Business

Marc Kotler reported that he would like the SAPC to address more middle school issues and said that the Lead by Example program would attract parents at King Philip Middle School to attend SAPC meetings. Dan Jordan suggested Lead by Example and Community of Concern doing some joint initiatives. Jeff Bersin encouraged Marc to suggest agenda items when the request is made each month.

Helen Drohan brought up the suggestion to stress the importance of confidentiality at future SAPC meetings. Members had various views about this including those who felt that it's important to get the word out about this issue and not keep meeting topics confidential. Helen asked that consideration be made to keep things confidential when appropriate.

Joanna Curry-Sartori recommended finding out the current resources in town. Dan Jordan reported that an intern could assist in obtaining this information. There was also discussion about offering a resource fair.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Next WH SAPC Meeting

Thursday, June 4, 2015 5pm to 6:30pm – West Hartford Town Hall room 400 – **one week early!**

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Tyler

May 15, 2015

